

CITY OF BALTIMORE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lead Contamination Found in More Children's Jewelry

Baltimore Health Department Proposes Rule to Ban Items Exceeding Paint Standard

August 14, 2006 -- The Baltimore City Health Department is releasing the results of its initial investigation of lead contamination in children's jewelry. The Department is also proposing a city regulation that would ban children's jewelry with excessive lead content.

The initial investigation has involved the testing of 17 items purchased at six locations in Baltimore City. The testing was conducted by the accredited laboratory of Penniman & Browne in Baltimore, Maryland, according to the protocol for total lead analysis developed by the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Four of the 17 items tested contained elements with more than 600 parts per million of lead. This is the federal standard for lead in paint. The four items were:



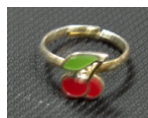
A pearl ring sold at Claire's as part of the "Princess Collection" which contained elements as high as 68,071 parts per million of lead. Claire's has voluntarily withdrawn this ring from the market in Baltimore City.



A ring with hearts sold at Wal-Mart with 3,540 parts per million of lead.



A ring sold at Claire's with the flower containing 874 parts per million of lead and the ring 622 parts per million of lead.



A ring sold at Claire's with the ring containing 682 parts per million of lead.

Mouthing or swallowing these items could expose children to dangerous amounts of lead. The full results of the testing are online at

<http://www.baltimorecity.gov/government/health/jewelry.html>.

The Health Department is proposing a regulation that would ban the sale of children's jewelry with a lead level over 600 parts per million in Baltimore City. Under the proposed regulation, the Department would test at least 100 items of children's jewelry in the six months following implementation. The Department is requesting that the public and interested parties provide comment by September 29, 2006.

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